

REMARKS

In the Office Action the Examiner noted that claims 1-12 are pending in the application, and the Examiner rejected all claims. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to correct a grammatical error. No new matter has been presented. Thus, claims 1-12 remain pending in the application. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below, and reconsideration of all rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Prima Facie Burden For 35 USC §102 Rejection Not Met

The Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has not established a prima facie case of anticipation for the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejections of claims 1-12. To wit, the Examiner has failed to identify the feature of claim 1 recited as "transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned." The Examiner's cited prior art reference does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, any such feature, and the Examiner failed to either identify the feature or even suggest the inherency of the same. Further, the operation enabled by the recited language of this feature, namely that the room number is used to obtain the guest information, contradicts the Examiner's characterizations of other operations enabled by the recited features of claim 1, as discussed thoroughly in the following section of this Amendment. The remaining independent claims recite features similar to those of claim 1, and the respective dependent claims include those features.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the current Office Action is defective as a result of the Examiner's failure to establish a prima facie case of anticipation, and that an action subsequent to this action should not be made final.

Examiner's Response To Arguments

In items 7-10 on page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner provided responses to the arguments submitted by the Applicant in the Amendment filed on September 12, 2006, even though the rejections of the prior action were overcome. The Applicant therefore provides the following remarks regarding the Examiner's responses.

In item 8 the Examiner stated that the claim language is broad with respect to hotel facilities, and went on to state that the guest room is a facility of the hotel. Assuming, arguendo, that the guest room could be considered a facility of the hotel, even though this is contradicted

by the use of the term room number in the claim, the Applicant respectfully submits that it is improper for the Examiner to characterize the guest room as both a hotel facility and a service of the hotel facility, as was done in the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 in item 3 of the Office Action.

In item 9 the Examiner stated that the claim language is broad and it is inherent if a guest is staying at a hotel at some point and time the room number had to be put into the system. The Examiner stated this in response "to applicants argument that the hotel does not obtain and input the room number of the guest." However, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has completely mischaracterized the Applicant's argument, which was made in reference to a previous prior art rejection. To wit, the Applicant stated:

Further, assuming, arguendo, that entering the hotel room were to be considered as visiting the hotel facilities, the hotel reservation system of the hotel does not obtain and input the room number of the guest when the guest visits the room. While the hotel reservation system is notified of check-in when the user first arrives, the hotel reservation system is obviously already aware of the room number of the guest's room. There is no obtaining of the room number when the guest enters the room, the wireless door lock merely receives the valid key token issued to the user.

Therefore, it is apparent that the Applicant was stating that the obtaining and inputting of the room number of the guest was not performed when the guest visits the room. In fact, the very next sentence stated that the room number is already in the hotel reservation system. Thus, the Applicant is unaware as to why the Examiner found it necessary to provide such a response.

In item 10 the Examiner stated, "As to applicants arguments regarding the limitations of applicants attributes and that attributes are transmitted automatically via the room number. However, as claimed the claims are not claimed in this manner. The attributes are merely obtained, how or when attributes are obtained are not limiting as applicant has currently claimed."

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this allegation by the Examiner. First, the Applicant is unaware of any such arguments regarding attributes being transmitted automatically via the room number. Secondly, the claim language very clearly indicates that the room number is transmitted to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned. To wit, claim 1 clearly recites "obtaining and inputting a room number of a guest when the guest visits the hotel facility; [and] transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned." While claim 1 is silent to how the attributes may have originally been entered into the lodging management

system, that is not germane to the arguments that have overcome both the previous and current prior art references, because claim 1 clearly recites “transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned”, and the rules of antecedent basis clearly indicate that this is “the information about the guest which has been obtained from the lodging management system” also recited in claim 1. Therefore, as explained more fully in the following section of this Amendment, the attribute comparison recited in claim 1 is performed with the guest information obtained after transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system, which is in direct contrast to the prior art cited by the Examiner in the current action.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §102

In items 1-6 on page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,614,703, issued to Martin et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Martin”). The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner’s rejections of these claims.

Claim 1 of the present application recites “obtaining and inputting a room number of a guest when the guest visits the hotel facility; [and] transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned.” In other words, the room number assigned to the guest is used to obtain information regarding that guest. The Applicant respectfully submits that Martin does not disclose or suggest at least those features of claim 1.

Martin merely discloses a guest registration system in which, when a guest inserts a general purpose credit card into a reader of a guest accessible registration terminal, the card reader reads necessary information stored in the general purpose credit card and delivers the information to a computer disposed in a place of lodging, such as a hotel, motel, and the like, so that the guest can register at the place of lodging quickly and efficiently. The Applicants respectfully submits that it is apparent that Martin does not pertain to a configuration in which a service management apparatus for hotel facilities (e.g., a seat management apparatus for hotel facilities) operates in conjunction with a lodging management system for managing information about guests.

Martin discloses a hotel registration system which handles most check-in and departure situations without the need for a desk clerk (Column 1, Lines 12-14). This system may be utilized so that the front desk of the hotel does not have to be staffed at all times, allowing hotels

with limited operating budgets to not have to staff the front desk during inactive shifts, and so that guests do not have to ring a bell or perform some similar procedure (Column 1, Lines 30-45). The system utilizes a registration terminal which allows a potential guest to insert a general purpose credit card, at which point the system sends a series of prompts to the user via the display screen, receives the user's information, and assigns the guest an available room. The automated system then informs the guest that the guest's credit card is the key for the assigned room (Column 2, Lines 28-55).

The Examiner alleged that Martin "teaches a system and method for obtaining and inputting a guests room number into a hotel computer system (C. 2 l. 23-27)." However, the cited section of Martin merely discloses that a guest arriving during the absence of a desk manager "will still be able to register at the place of lodging, receive a room and key, and check in quickly and efficiently" (Column 2, Lines 25-27). The Examiner is apparently equating the assigning of a room number in the system of Martin with the "obtaining and inputting a room number" recited in claim 1. In Martin, "The card reader obtains card identity information from the card, and delivers the information to a computer provided with guest registration software for directing the computer" (Column 2, Lines 33-36). "Once the preferences have been entered, the guest registration system will assign the guest an available room" (Column 2, Lines 49-51). However, the Applicant respectfully submits that it would be clear to one skilled in the art that there is a marked difference in obtaining and inputting a room number, as recited in claim 1, and merely assigning a room number as done by the registration system in Martin. As the guest had no room number before visiting the registration terminal, there was no room number of the guest to be obtained. And the registration does not "obtain" the room number at all. Rather, the registration system "assigns" the room number.

Nevertheless, assuming arguendo that the assigning of the room number by the registration system could somehow be construed as "obtaining and inputting a room number of a guest when the guest visits the hotel facility", the Applicant respectfully submits that Martin does not disclose, suggest, or even contemplate "transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned." Further, not only does Martin not contemplate this feature, but the Examiner has not made any attempt to identify this claimed feature in the disclosure of Martin. As previously discussed in this Amendment, the Applicant respectfully submits that this Office Action is defective as a result of this omission.

Nowhere in Martin is there any contemplation of transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned. During the registration process disclosed in Martin, the registration software prompts the guest for information such as whether the user has pre-registered, what type of room is desired, the expected length of the stay, smoking preference, etc. "Once the preferences have been entered, the guest registration system will assign the guest an available room" (Column 2, Lines 49-51). This is the only time that any such guest information is obtained in Martin, and it is quite obviously done before the room number is assigned. Therefore, in direct contrast to claim 1, Martin does not disclose "transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system to obtain the information about the guest concerned."

Claim 1 of the present application also recites "comparing a service management table for the management of attributes of services of the hotel facilities and for the management of availabilities of the hotel facilities, with the guest's own attributes in the information about the guest which has been obtained from the lodging management system, and indicating a service suitable for the guest's attributes." In other words, various services of the hotel facilities can be indicated for the guest according to the information about the guest obtained by transmitting the room number to the lodging management system. The Applicant respectfully submits that these features are also not disclosed or suggested by Martin.

The Examiner alleged that Martin discloses "comparing guest attributes with hotel facilities and indicating suitable facilities. (C. 2 I. 40-52)." As previously discussed in the Amendment, the Examiner is apparently characterizing the registration software in Martin prompting the guest for lodging preferences as the recited features in claim 1. However, the Applicant respectfully submits, again, that all of these guest attributes cited by the Examiner are asked for by the registration software before assigning any room number to the guest. In fact, the whole point of the guest entering this information is so that a suitable room, and therefore room number, may be assigned to the guest. It is therefore not reasonable to state that the system in Martin uses guest information that was obtained from the lodging management system by transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging management system, because that information was only asked for and used before the assigning of the room number.

Further, Martin does not contemplate "indicating a service suitable for the guest's attributes" from the services of the hotel facilities. Even when the system in Martin prompts the user for lodging preferences, which occurs before the assigning of the room number, this merely results in the type of room which will be assigned to the guest. While the Examiner has

apparently characterized the recited “facilities” of claim 1 as the hotel room itself in Martin, the Applicant respectfully submits that the hotel room could not also reasonably be characterized as a “service” of the hotel facilities. This would be tantamount to stating that the hotel room is a service of the hotel room. Therefore, Martin does not contemplate indicating a service of the hotel facilities suitable for the guest’s attributes in the information obtained by transmitting the room number of the guest to the lodging system to obtain the information. Again, even if the Examiner does consider the hotel room of Martin to be both the “service of the hotel facilities” and the “hotel facilities” themselves, the room number was not used to obtain the guest information. It is also noted that the Examiner has not used the recited claim language in this portion of the claim rejection. While the Examiner stated that Martin discloses “indicating suitable facilities”, claim 1 actually recites “indicating a service suitable for the guest’s attributes”, the service being one of the services of the hotel facilities. The Applicant respectfully submits that this provides further evidence that Martin does not disclose or suggest the discussed recited feature of claim 1.

Therefore, Martin apparently does not disclose any of the recited features of claim 1 discussed above, and certainly not all of the recited features. Accordingly, Martin does not disclose every element of the Applicant’s claim 1. In order for a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach each and every element of the claim (MPEP §2131). Therefore, since Martin does not disclose the features recited in independent claim 1, as stated above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Martin, and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection is earnestly and respectfully solicited.

Claims 2-3 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not disclosed or suggested by Martin. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-3 also patentably distinguish over Martin.

For instance, claim 2 recites “transmitting the room number of the guest obtained when the guest visits the hotel facility in a case in which a facility charge is paid with a hotel charge at the check-out, to the lodging management system with the data of the facility charge to be paid with the hotel charge.” The Examiner alleged that “Martin teaches tracking facility charge to be paid at check-out. (Pg. 2 l. 50-55).” However, the Applicant respectfully notes that the Examiner has not identified both a facility charge and a hotel charge in Martin. This is due to the fact that the Examiner has characterized the hotel room as the facility, and therefore there would be only one such charge in Martin. Thus, Martin does not contemplate both a facility charge and a hotel

charge, regardless of how broadly the Examiner interprets the claim language, and certainly does not disclose the recited features of claim 2.

Further, claim 3 recites “transmitting the service availability information about the hotel facility to indicating devices in the guest rooms and lobby, and to a home page of the hotel, from the service management table of the hotel facility.” The Examiner alleged that “Martin discloses “transmitting service availability to user at various devices (C. 2 l. 61-61 & C. 5 l. 58-61).” However, the Examiner has simply cited sections of Martin that disclose that the guest’s credit card can be authorized to open the locks on various other areas of the place of lodging, or encoding guest information on the guest’s credit card. There is no contemplation whatsoever of any service availability information being transmitted to indicating devices. The Applicant respectfully submits that it is not reasonable to consider a card reader as an indicating device. “When the guest runs the proper credit card through his guest room card reader, a door lock release apparatus at the guest room door will open the lock, allowing the guest into the room” (Column 2, Lines 58-61). Thus, there is no indicating device disclosed in Martin. Further, the Examiner has already characterized the room preference information gleaned in Martin as the service availability information, and this is not the type of information that is sent to the card readers in Martin. Rather, the guest’s credit card is simply authorized to open the locks on various other areas of the place of lodging (Column 2, Lines 61-63). Further, Martin does not contemplate any such indication on a home page of the hotel, as recited in claim 3. Thus, Martin does not contemplate transmitting a service availability to indicating devices in the guest rooms, lobby and home page of the hotel, regardless of how broadly the Examiner interprets the claim language, and certainly does not disclose the recited features of claim 3.

Independent claims 4, 7, and 8-9 all recite similar features to those discussed in regard to claim 1 of the present application. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 4, 7, and 8 also patentably distinguish over Martin.

Claims 5-6 depend from claim 4 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not disclosed or suggested by Martin. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5-6 also patentably distinguish over Martin.

Claims 10-12 depend from claim 9 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not disclosed or suggested by Martin. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 10-12 also patentably distinguish over Martin.

Summary

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 1 has been amended to correct a grammatical error. No new matter has been presented. Claims 1-12 are pending and under consideration.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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